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Senate and House concur, send Sen. Stamas' boating hit-and-run bills to governor

Lansing — Today, the Michigan Senate and House of Representatives agreed to send state Sen. Tony Stamas' (R-Midland) boating hit-and-run legislation to the governor for approval.

The proposed bills elevate the crime for the operator of a boat involved in a hit-and-run accident resulting in a death or crippling injury to a felony. The change makes the penalty for this crime the same as those for causing a hit-and-run accident in an automobile.

"I'm pleased that both my colleagues in the Senate and the House agreed these changes are common sense changes," Stamas said. "It shouldn't matter if you are driving an automobile or a boat, if you kill or injure someone the penalties should be the same."

Currently, the driver of a boat involved in such an accident is guilty of a misdemeanor and is subject to a maximum sentence of 90 days in jail.

Under the changes proposed by Stamas in Senate Bills 658 and 659, someone guilty of failure to stop at the scene of a marine accident causing death would be guilty of a felony punishable by up to 15 years in prison and up to \$10,000 in fines.

Someone guilty of failure to stop at the scene of a marine accident causing serious impairment would be guilty of a felony punishable by up to five years in prison and up to \$5,000 in fines.

In September 2002, 33-year-old Brent Veitengruber of Linwood was killed in a hit-and-run boating accident on Wixom Lake in Gladwin County. The operator of the other boat was convicted of negligent homicide and negligent crippling, a two-year high court misdemeanor. The operator was sentenced this past July to one year in jail.

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